I. BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ISSUES STATEMENT CALLING FOR AN END TO ISRAELI ACTIONS AGAINST PALESTINIANS

The following statement was issued on 6 August 1997 by the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see GA/PAL/766):

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has followed with increasing concern the grave developments in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Bureau believes that the measures being imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, in particular the blockade of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the harsh economic measures, are a form of collective punishment. These measures are in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and are also contrary to the letter and spirit of the agreements reached between the parties.

The Bureau unreservedly condemns all acts of violence against defenceless civilians, such as the recent bombing in West Jerusalem. By fostering a climate of hatred and fear, such attacks seek to destabilize the entire region and threaten to do irreparable harm to the peace process. They must not be allowed to succeed in their objective.

The Bureau believes that retaliatory measures which exacerbate Palestinian suffering and lead to increasing despair are bound to be counter-productive. Such measures are also being taken against a background of continued construction of settlements, delayed withdrawal from the occupied territory, and lack of implementation of essential provisions of the agreements reached.

The Bureau calls for an immediate end to those measures and stresses the need for respect for the provisions of international law and, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable to all the occupied territory, including Jerusalem.

The Bureau calls on the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, on the co-sponsors of the peace process, and on the international community as a whole to do everything in their power to save the peace process. It is imperative to re-establish a spirit of mutual confidence and cooperation between the parties, in order to resume negotiations urgently for the full implementation of the agreements already reached. Only through a process based on reciprocal trust will it be possible to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the region.

II. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS BOMB ATTACK IN JERUSALEM

The following statement was issued by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 4 September 1997 (SG/SM/6315):

The Secretary-General was outraged to learn of the triple bomb attack today in Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem in which several people were killed and hundreds wounded, including young children. He again condemns in the strongest possible terms this appalling act of violence and extends his condolences to the Government of Israel and the families of those killed and injured.

The Secretary-General is convinced that it is time for the Israelis and the Palestinians to sit together and to take stock of the situation on the ground and in their negotiations, to decide what can be done to prevent violence, address its causes and do everything possible to restart the peace talks. He urges immediate action to that end.

III. UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING/EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT GENEVA FROM 25 TO 28 AUGUST 1997

The United Nations International NGO Meeting/European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine on the theme "Ending thirty years of occupation - the role of NGOs" was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 25 to 28 August, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 51/23 and 51/24 of 4 December 1996.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Anatoli M Zlenko (Ukraine); and Mr. M. Nasser Al Kidwa (Palestine).

The meeting was attended by 18 panelists and workshop resource persons, and representatives of 107 NGOs, 15 of them as observers. It was also attended by 31 Governments, 5 intergovernmental organizations, 13 United Nations bodies and agencies, 5 NGO coordinating committees and a delegation of Palestine.

At the opening session, a message from Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was delivered by his representative, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Statements were also made by Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and Mr. As'ad Abdul-Rahman, representative of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Also addressing the meeting were Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, and Mr. John Gee, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

In addition, statements were made by Mr. Herman Leonard de Silva (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; Mr. Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs of the League of Arab States; Mr. Abdelaziz Aboughosh, representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and Mr. Venant Wege Nzomwita, representative of the Organization of African Unity.

The meeting began with a plenary session entitled "Briefings on the current political situation". Speakers included Mr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, PLO Executive Committee; Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner General for UNRWA; and Ms. Asthma Khader, Director-General of Al-Haq.

The second plenary session was entitled "NGO action on the question of Palestine - challenges and prospects." Speakers included Mr. Gabi Baramki, First Vice-President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace; Mr. Fritz Frölich, Regional Representative of the Society for Austro-Arab Relations, Jerusalem; Mr. K.M. Khan, Chairman of the Asian Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine and member of ICCP; Mr Sébastian Carliez, Executive Secretary of the French NGO Platform for Palestine; Ms. Isabelle Avran, Secretary-General of the Association France-Palestine; Mr. Ahmed Saad, member of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Haifa) and member of ICCP; Mr. José Elias, President of the Palestinian Federation in Chile and Vice-Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; Mr. David Graybeal, Chairman of the North American

Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC); Mr. Kathy Bergen, member of the American Friends Service Committee (Philadelphia) and member of NACC; and Mr. Allam Jarrar, Vice-President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace and member of ICCP.

In addition, six workshops on action opportunities and technical resources were held consecutively for NGO participants. The participating NGOs elected a new International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and a new European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP). They also adopted an NGO plan of action containing proposals made during their deliberations in plenary and in the workshops. The full text is reproduced below:

NGO Plan of Action

Introduction

The non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations International NGO Meeting/European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in August 1997 were informed of the current situation with regard to the negotiations between Israel and the PLO, the desperate situation on the ground, and of the role of the international community. They expressed serious concern over the current stalemate in the negotiations, resulting from Israeli policies and practices which can lead the Middle East region into a new period of extreme tensions and possible conflict. They called for the immediate lifting of the closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip which have severely impaired the ability of the Palestinians to earn their livelihoods and go about the legitimate pursuits of their daily life.

The NGO participants strongly felt the need for coordinated international campaigns in support of the rights of the Palestinian people. They assessed, nationally, regionally and internationally, the activities of the NGO movement on the question of Palestine, shared their experience and developed new ideas, proposals and strategies to oppose the current deterioration of the situation of the Palestinian people and to bring about the end of the 30-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and the other Arab territories, and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

They concluded that NGO campaigns on the national and international level should be primarily focused on ending the Israeli policy of establishing and expanding settlements, supporting the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including its own State with East Jerusalem as its capital, ensuring the release of all Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons without trial and stopping all forms of torture, supporting the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return and/or compensation, as well as family reunification and on continuing and intensifying all efforts to assist the Palestinian people in the economic and social fields.

The NGO participants declared individually and collectively that they recognize the State of Palestine with borders in conformity with those announced by the Palestine National Council in its Declaration of Independence of 1988. This involves full national sovereignty and self-determination for the entire Palestinian people inside their country and in exile to be exercised in the territory encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip including East Jerusalem in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions. The NGO participants called upon all NGOs worldwide to join them in this solemn declaration and to petition the Governments of their respective nations to recognize the State of Palestine on this basis.

The NGO participants welcomed the results of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly and agreed to undertake concerted efforts towards their respective Governments to implement the provisions of resolutions ES-10/2 and ES-10/3,

in particular with regard to the convening of a conference by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, in order to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

The NGO participants affirmed the importance of supporting and highlighting the role of Palestinian NGOs. They stated their commitment to support the Israeli peace forces and the NGOs which uphold Palestinian rights and the rights of the other peoples of the region.

The NGOs expressed their appreciation of the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights. They declared their intention of urging their Governments to fully support the work of these institutions.

Participating NGOs committed themselves to undertake the following activities:

Campaigns against settlements

To oppose the Israeli settlement policy, NGOs agreed that:

It was imperative, on the Palestinian level, to organize direct popular resistance by the Palestinian people and pre-eemptive measures to protect threatened areas. Resources would have to be mobilized and popular resistance had to be organized and supported. A list of Palestinian NGOs working in that direction had to be made known to the network as potential partners for other NGOs that wanted to support this movement. A grassroots network of land defence committees had to be established and equipped with experienced staff and resources. In areas threatened by the Israeli settlement policy, Palestinian housing projects should be developed and construction started;

Camping on endangered areas was considered a highly efficient means of hindering the practical implementation of expropriations and the construction of settlements. In case of the demolition of houses, the presence of representatives of international NGOs as foreign observers could help to hinder the work of the bulldozers;

Legal action within the Israeli judicial system was important to slow down the implementation of settlement projects, to render them complicated and difficult and to stop some of them eventually. Legal advice should be made available to farmers and individual Palestinian families. This required good knowledge of Israeli legal procedures, which should be obtained with the assistance of Israeli lawyers and organizations active in that field;

Solidarity, coordination and cooperation with NGOs in other countries, in particular in North America and Europe, as well as with the Israeli peace and human rights movement was very important. International campaigns should focus on delegitimizing settlements by demonstrating that they were directed towards the colonization of the Palestinian people's land, against peace and constituted a direct threat to the very viability of Palestinian society and national existence. Advocacy towards Governments and parliaments should be supported by sound legal arguments deriving from international law, the agreements between Israel and the PLO and United Nations conventions and resolutions. The ICCP in cooperation with Palestinian NGOs should prepare a paper of argumentation to be used for advocacy and for public presentations;

It was especially important to organize a sustained media campaign in Europe and North America, to raise the standard of presentation to the media, using actual maps, videos, etc. NGO representatives working in that field should attend

media training programmes in order to maximize their impact on public opinion. NGOs should take advantage of the Internet to gather up-to-date information, to present themselves to a potential constituency and to liaise with each other;

Any campaigns in North America, Europe and elsewhere should include the demand for economic pressure on Israel, showing the economic consequences of political developments in the region. Demanding sanctions against Israel should be a tool used by grassroots organizations as a response to the policies of the Israeli Government. Urgent action was required to oppose the ratification by national parliaments in Europe of the Israeli Association Agreement with the European Union which is expected to enter into force on 1 January 1998, after its ratification by the 15 member States and the European Parliament, on the basis of the human rights clause contained in article 2. The NGO campaigns should focus on parliamentarians in order to influence the relevant debate in the European Parliament;

Parallel activities in related fields should support the campaigns against settlements: campaigns for the right to worship in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the occupied territory, helping Palestinian Jerusalemites to defend their national and civil rights, boycott of Israeli products, in particular those produced in settlements, initiating Palestinian housing projects in different places, and implementing individually and unilaterally the right to return.

Campaign for East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian State

In order to defend Palestinian rights to East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian State, NGOs agreed to the following:

Elected Palestinian deputies representing Jerusalem should be invited by European parliamentarians and/or NGOs to express their concerns to national and other parliamentary forums;

The ICCP and the ECCP should organize a trip to Jerusalem for a high-level delegation of jurists to examine the situation on the ground at first hand and to inform their public opinion at home about what is occurring;

NGOs should launch campaigns to inform their constituencies of the illegality of Israeli measures intended to change the status of Jerusalem by organizing seminars, conferences, issuing pamphlets and sending postcards and letters. They should seek to bring home to their public the impact these measures are having upon Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who are denied free access to places of worship, important medical facilities and to Jerusalem, a key centre of Palestinian economic, social and intellectual life. They should highlight through concrete cases what the Palestinians of Jerusalem are undergoing;

The ICCP, NACC and individual NGOs should find ways and means of making known to members of the United States Congress and United States embassies around the world their strong objection to the decision to proceed with moving the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in recognition of Israel's claim that Jerusalem is its capital. This is in disregard of United Nations resolutions and has been decided without an agreement on Jerusalem's future having been concluded between Israel and the Palestinians;

NGOs, particularly those affiliated with Christian churches, should launch a systematic information campaign directed at Christian pilgrims visiting the holy sites in order to inform them of the relevant legal and political issues, and the suffering of the Palestinian people and urge upon them the importance of meeting local Palestinian Muslims and Christians during their visit;

NGOs were encouraged to participate in the international conference "Jerusalem, Capital of

Peace" to be held in Brussels from 27 to 29 November 1997, organized by the Forum des Citoyens de la Méditerranée.

Campaigns for refugee rights, including the right of return and family reunification

To support the rights of Palestinian refugees and family reunification, the NGOs agreed to:

Respond to the impending 50th anniversary of the creation of Israel (15 May 1998) with campaigns aimed at drawing the attention of public opinion towards the plight of the Palestine refugees and renewing their Governments' commitment towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948. NGOs should seek to involve a wide range of new NGOs in their efforts. The model of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity on 29 November may be followed to organize national events, to initiate debates in national parliaments, among other activities, in order to raise public awareness;

Lobby Governments in donor countries, to ensure that they will continue to provide the necessary support for UNRWA to maintain and improve its services to Palestinians both inside and outside their homeland; lobby potential donors, including private companies and large NGOs to join the donor community;

Support the campaign of twinning refugee camps with towns and villages in Europe;

Issue a pamphlet for tourists going to the region about the situation of the refugees;

Pay particular attention to the situation in the refugee camps in Lebanon, to send a fact-finding mission and to draw the necessary conclusions in support of the Palestinian refugees there.

Campaign on economic and social issues

To assist the Palestinian people in the economic and social fields, participating NGOs agreed to:

Promote tourism to the Palestinian territory, encourage tourists, church groups and others to spend more time in the Palestinian areas. Besides the economic effects, this would help to influence public opinion in the countries of origin of the visitors. Specialized programmes for students, trade unionists and others should bring them to Palestinian homes to show the effects of the closures. Lobby publishers to follow politically correct terminology in tourist guides and other books dealing with the region, to contribute to improving the image of the Palestinians and to promote tourism to the Palestinian areas;

Promote support for the construction of the port of Gaza, the opening of the Rafah airport and the implementation of a safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank;

Provide concrete assistance in the fields of education, development of curriculums, communication and respective technologies;

Advocate that international music, dance and theater groups scheduled to visit Israel make their appearance subject to Israel's compliance with human rights conventions and encourage them to accept engagements in the Palestinian territory, providing these groups with facts on the situation on the ground and promoting contacts with Palestinian cultural groups.

IV. EXCERPT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session (A/52/1, Supplement No. 1), contains the following paragraphs relating to the question of Palestine:

99. The longest-standing United Nations humanitarian mission is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In addition to providing essential education, health, relief and social services to 3.4 million refugees, UNRWA has undertaken a range of projects aimed at developing infrastructure, improving living conditions and creating employment opportunities. The relocation of its headquarters from Vienna to Gaza in July 1996 helped strengthen the Agency's relationship with the Palestinian Authority. Yet the stagnation in donor contributions combined with the steady growth in the beneficiary population have led to a quantitative and qualitative decline in services.

115. The Middle East remains one of the most critical points of tension in the world today. It is my hope that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will be revived and its forward momentum fully restored. The United Nations contributions to stability in the region include the humanitarian activities of UNRWA, discussed in the previous section; the development-related work of the Special Coordinator, dealt with below: and three peacekeeping missions: the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. With the cooperation of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, the efforts of UNDOF have been successful on the Golan Heights. In southern Lebanon, on the other hand, hostilities have continued between Israeli forces, with auxiliaries, and Lebanese groups. Elsewhere in the Middle East, the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission helps to ensure stability in the area of its deployment.

126. Also unique, but very different, is the Office of the Special Coordinator. It provides overall guidance to United Nations programmes and agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and works closely with the World Bank, in assisting the Palestinian Authority to achieve an integrated approach to development and a self-sustaining economy and to establish effective administrative institutions.

V. COMMITTEE ON ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION EXAMINES SITUATION IN ISRAEL; ADOPTS STATEMENTS

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which met at Geneva from 4 to 22 August 1997, examined the situation in Israel. On 18 August 1997, the Committee adopted the following statements (HR/CERD/97/53):

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination this afternoon rejected the closures and related measures imposed by the Israeli authorities on the occupied territories as a form of collective punishment and urged the Government of Israel to lift these measures forthwith.

...

The Committee confirmed its view that the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were not only illegal under international law but also an obstacle to peace and the enjoyment of human rights

by the whole population in the region. Furthermore, it condemned again, in the strongest terms, terrorism in all its forms and reiterated that there was no justification whatsoever for indiscriminate killing of innocent people.

The Committee also rejected the closures and related measures imposed by the Israeli authorities on the occupied territories that amounted to collective punishment and urged the Government of Israel to lift those measures forthwith.

Under its early warning and urgent procedures mechanism, the Committee made a formal statement on the situation in Israel on 22 August 1997 (HR/CERD/97/60).

In observations on the situation in Israel, the Committee reiterated its full endorsement of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization peace process and expressed, once again, the opinion that the principles and obligations of the Convention should be an essential ingredient of that process. Serious concern was expressed over the continuing policies of expansion of settlements which give rise to increasing tensions in the region and jeopardize the peace process.

The Committee also condemned, once more, in the strongest terms, terrorism in all its forms and acts which resulted in the indiscriminate killing of innocent people and reiterated that there was no justification whatsoever for such acts. In addition, it rejected the closures of the Palestinian territories and the blocking of reimbursement of fees and revenues to the Palestinian Authority, imposed by the Israeli authorities in the wake of the dreadful suicide bombings in Jerusalem on 30 July 1997, which amounted to collective punishment. The Committee urged the Government of Israel to lift these measures.

VI. SUBCOMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES ISSUES STATEMENT ON ISRAELI ACTIONS

On 27 August 1997, Mr. Jose Bengoa (Chile), Chairman of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, read out a statement through which the Subcommission expressed its profound concern over the suffering of the Palestinian people, particularly the heads of households, who had been subject to severe restrictions of movement and thus were unable to feed and care for their families in Gaza and in other territories occupied by Israel. The Subcommission condemned all acts of terrorism and violence wherever they originated, and wished to condemn strongly the recent double suicide attack in Jerusalem. Realizing the impact of the blockade on the basic human rights of the Palestinian people, it called on the Israeli Government to put an end to the blockade and other measures imposed on the territories and called on all parties to make every effort so that a positive dialogue could take place once again and peace could be restored (HR/SC/97/31).

VII. UNRWA RECEIVES ADDITIONAL PLEDGES, RESCINDS REDUCTIONS IN SERVICES

The following press release was issued by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on 10 September 1997 (PAL/1845):

GAZA, 10 September (UNRWA) -- After obtaining over $19 million in new pledges from donor countries for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) regular programmes in 1997, UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen today announced that he was able to revoke some of the cuts in Agency services which he had been forced to introduce on 19 August.

Today's announcement follows a meeting with major donors and host Governments in the Jordanian capital of Amman on 9 September. Mr. Hansen said the Agency had been facing a gap of $70 million between the Agency's budget, as approved by the General Assembly, and its estimated 1997 income. Austerity measures had achieved savings of some $50 million, but some $20 million had remained unfunded by mid-August.

The situation had forced the Agency to announce a series of emergency measures. They included a review of school charges, a freeze on the recruitment of 249 additional teachers needed Agency-wide to cope with the growth in the student population, a 15 per cent reduction in international staff, discontinuation of the Agency's portion of university scholarships and a freeze in hospital reimbursements and referrals for November and December 1997.

Mr. Hansen emphasized that the situation facing the Agency remained critical. The new pledges announced at yesterday's meeting were directed at the specific $20 million gap which had prompted the emergency measures. Even that gap was not completely closed.

"We are still dealing with a gap of $50 million this year, and the outlook for the next two years is not at all clear. Yesterday's new pledges eased the worst pressure. We will survive this year, but we cannot afford to relax", Mr. Hansen told journalists.

Measures to be cancelled included the decision to impose school charges on Palestine refugee pupils attending UNRWA schools, Mr. Hansen said. The freeze in hospital reimbursements and referrals would also be lifted. Measures still in force include a 15 per cent reduction in international staff. The recruitment of additional teachers into normal staff positions will also remain frozen.

"If we are to retain our ability to deliver services at appropriate levels for the 3.5 million Palestine refugees whom we serve, some of the measures I announced on 19 August will have to remain in place", Mr. Hansen said. "We will consider in detail how we can best meet the challenge of providing quality education for the refugee school pupils now and in the future."

The Commissioner-General said the Agency would continue to provide scholarship subsidies for existing recipients. Under current funding projections, however, it would only be possible to finance new scholarships if special additional funding was secured.

Mr. Hansen paid tribute to those donors who had already contributed more than their fair share to UNRWA, according to the assessed scale of contributions to the United Nations. He also thanked those countries which had announced additional pledges for the Agency's regular programmes and special activities during yesterday's meeting.

During that meeting, the Government of Japan announced that its annual pledge of about $12.6 million for 1997, including a substantial proportion of UNRWA's regular budget, would be paid before the end of this year, rather than early in 1998 in accordance with the Japanese fiscal year. Japan also announced its intention to provide additional amounts for the special needs of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and for food aid in 1997.

The United States, UNRWA's largest single cash donor country, announced $7.5 million in additional funds for the Agency in 1997, including $1.5 million for emergency assistance in Lebanon. The Netherlands and Germany each pledged about $1.0 million. Italy pledged about $0.9 million.

Spain pledged about $500,000. Luxembourg announced that it would consider pledging an additional amount in the next few weeks.

Yesterday's meeting with major donors and host Governments had been called to discuss the Agency's draft 1998-1999 budget, to be presented to the General Assembly later this year. Mr. Hansen told delegates at the meeting that a financially crippled UNRWA would be a negative political factor in the region. "The cost of restoring our operations, should they be suspended or cancelled, would vastly outweigh the modest sums the Agency needs", Mr. Hansen said.

During the meeting, Mr. Hansen met with representatives of UNRWA staff and the refugee community. He conveyed to delegates the concerns expressed to him about the repercussions of the measures which had been announced by the Agency in August and circulated copies of petitions received by UNRWA in recent days protesting against cuts in the Agency's services.

VIII. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION HOLDS TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PALESTINIAN JOURNALISTS

The following press release was issued by the Department of Public Information on 15 September 1997 (PAL/1849-PI/1034):

Ten Palestinian journalists from broadcast and print media will participate in a training programme organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI), from 15 September to 7 November.

During the programme, which is designed to strengthen the participants' professional capacity as information media personnel, the journalists will attend briefings by officials of the United Nations and United Nations specialized agencies, along with representatives of media organizations in the United States.

Participants will attend a one-week programme in Washington, D.C., participate in a skills training internship at CNN headquarters at Atlanta and attend two weeks of special classes at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. In addition, they will obtain on-the-job training by serving as temporary United Nations correspondents, covering United Nations meetings and activities on behalf of their media organizations.

This is the third programme being organized by DPI to assist the Palestinian people in building and strengthening their media capability.

The 10 journalists who will participate in this year's training programme are: Izzat Abu Abah, Editor and Reporter, Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC); Zaki Zakaria Abu Halaweh, of Al-Quds; Abed El Razeq Abu Jazar, of Al Hayat Al Jadida; Dawlat Abdel Halim Abu Sharifa, Advertising Department, PBC; Samir Salim Al-Agha, English News Director, PBC; Rana Nabil Anani, of Al-Ayyam; Maha Abed-Al Rahman Awwad, Radio Programme, PBC; Mutaz Mod Tabel Bseiso, General Manager, "Voice of Love and Peace" radio station; Ibrahim Mahmoud Abed Al Rahman, News TV, PBC; Omar Naji Nazzal, General Manager, Wattan TV.

IX. OTHER DOCUMENTATION ISSUED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

1. The Status of Jerusalem. A study prepared by the Division for Palestinian Rights, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The study focuses on the basic aspects of the status of Jerusalem as defined by the United Nations in the Palestine partition resolution of November 1947. It discusses subsequent efforts by the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies to implement that resolution. It describes the aftermath of the 1967 War, the occupation of East Jerusalem and the other Palestinian territories, the problem of settlements, land confiscation and other measures to alter the character of Jerusalem. It analyses the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and action taken by the international community since 1967 to assert and preserve the special status of Jerusalem. Independent proposals for a solution based on sharing arrangements are also examined. Copies of the study are available at the Division for Palestinian Rights in English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. It is also available on the Internet at http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/dpr/.

2. Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/52/131/Add.1).

3. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues. Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/372).

4. International Labour Organization. Report of the Director-General. Appendix: Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories.

X. LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ADOPTS STATEMENT ON DECISIONS OF ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

The Council of the League of Arab States held its extraordinary meeting on 5 August 1997 in Cairo and adopted a statement (S/1997/623), which is reproduced below:

Statement adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 5 August 1997 concerning the aggressive and abusive decisions taken by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Meeting in extraordinary session at the level of Permanent Representatives at the request of the State of Palestine, in order to adopt a unified inter-Arab position in the face of the aggressive and abusive decisions taken by the Government of Israel against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming the resolutions and communiqués adopted by the Arab Summit Conferences, in particular the Final Communiqué of the Cairo Summit Conference, adopted on 23 June 1996, and also the resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem,

Having discussed the grave developments being faced by the Palestinian people, bearing in mind the contents of the letter sent by Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and also the statement by the Palestinian political leadership concerning the policy of collective punishment adopted by the Israeli Government whereby a blockade has been imposed on towns and villages, international crossing points to Egypt and

Jordan have been closed, and the movement of workers and goods between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is being prevented, and the declared intention of the Israeli forces to operate in the area of the Palestinian Authority and to mobilize tanks, troops and rocket launchers in confrontation with Palestinian towns,

Affirms that this explosive situation and the acts of violence that are occurring in the region, of whose consequences it has persistently warned, is a result of the halting of the peace process stemming from Israel's actions and its failure to abide by signed agreements, and that it is a direct product of the following factors:

1. The continuation of the expansionist policy of the Israeli Government in building colonialist settlements, particularly in the Holy City of Jerusalem, seizing land, changing the demographic and geographical situation, violating all the resolutions and principles on which the peace process is founded, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the agreements signed by the Israeli Government with the Palestine Liberation Organization;

2. Action by the Israeli Government to impede and bring to a halt the various tracks within the peace process, and the consequential tension in the region;

3. The atmosphere of heightened tension resulting from incidents in which the colonialist settlers profaned moral and human values and desecrated Islamic and Christian religious beliefs and symbols, thereby inflaming religious feelings and bringing Arab, Islamic and Christian public opinion to fever pitch;

Holds Israel, therefore, fully responsible for poisoning the atmosphere and for the upsurge of violence, strongly condemns the Israeli decisions and actions which are incompatible with all the principles and resolutions on which the peace process was founded, and which offend against all international laws, particularly those relating to human rights, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and considers those decisions and actions as tantamount to a declaration of war on the Palestinian people, and on its political leadership, and demands that they be reversed immediately;

Considers that the way to ensure the return of security to the region, and to break out of the state of deadlock and tension, is to expedite the resumption of all tracks within the peace process, to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace through the total withdrawal of Israel from the Arab lands that it occupied in 1967, and subsequently, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978);

Commends the stand adopted by the Members of the United Nations which voted for the two draft resolutions at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly and requests the two co-sponsors of the peace process, the States of the European Union, the permanent members of the Security Council, Japan, the States of the non-aligned group and other States involved, the United Nations and international organizations and institutions to take urgent action with a view to lifting the blockade that has been imposed on the Palestinian people, which has become a grave threat to the lives of Palestinian citizens, and also to take action to bring about a resumption of the process of negotiation on all tracks so as to build on what has been achieved in that connection, and to give an impetus to the peace process so as to enable the region to avoid further violence, bloodshed, the worsening of hostility and loss of confidence, a result that will come about only if the process of colonialist settlement is brought to an end in all the Arab lands, particularly the Holy City of Jerusalem, and if the Israeli Government scrupulously implements the agreements it has reached with the Palestine Liberation Organization;

Categorically rejects the Israeli allegations to the effect that it is the Palestine National Authority that is responsible for acts of violence which were instigated by the obduracy of the Israeli Government and by its failure to honour the binding agreements

which it had signed, while the Palestine National Authority respects its own obligations;

Reaffirms that the resumption of negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, from the point at which the previous negotiations with the Israeli side stopped, will have a positive impact on the peace process as a whole;

Reaffirms its support and backing for the Palestinian people and for its leadership in confronting all these challenges, and calls on the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to expedite action at all levels, both regional and international, to lift the blockade on the Palestinian people;

Regards the present session as remaining open for the purpose of monitoring the grave developments that are taking place.